

# Mrs. Adlai Stevenson Tells of the Plans of the National Congress of Mothers.



## WILL SAVE THE CHILDREN THROUGH MOTHERS' HEARTS.

Rich Women and Poor Women Will Meet In the  
Same Clubs and Work Side by Side  
for the Common Good.

IT IS for the purpose of organizing what will be known as Mothers' Clubs that the National Congress of Mothers will meet February 16 in Washington. The object of this new movement is to interest mothers, and, for that matter, all men and women, in the questions most vital to the welfare of their children, not only from a physical and moral, but a spiritual

standpoint as well. I do not believe that there is any way in which to reach the moral sensibilities of the child except through his spiritual nature. In the mind of every child is the germ of spiritual thought, which, if properly developed, is the most susceptible channel through which to build up a fine moral nature. At the meetings of these clubs, which will take the

form of sociability, the best plans for the raising and development of children will be discussed, and the ideas of those who are giving the subject some thought will be read. Also instructive and comforting books will be at hand for mothers' reading at home, and thus you see that there will be a grand, concerted movement in the one direction and an ever awakened realization of the importance of attending to the minds and bodies of the little ones in order to make good moral characters and healthy men and women.

Personally, I feel much concerned for the children of fashionable mothers who think that in order to be in society they must be seen at every party, reception or ball; sacrificing the interests they owe their little ones to a desire to shine socially. These children need the mother's influence every day, and if the mornings

## PROMINENT WOMEN CONNECTED WITH THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S CONGRESS.

The idea of the club originated with Mrs. Theodore Birney, of Washington. The Congress will hold its first full meeting February 16, 1897, in Washington. It is to have no class line drawn. It will endeavor to establish free kindergartens over the United States and mothers' clubs in which no dues will be charged. Its prime object is the children, but the promoters wish to reach them through the hearts and lives of the mothers. There will be no lines of social distinction drawn, so that membership in the club is open to rich and poor alike, and all women will be earnestly appealed to to meet on the common ground of motherhood. The members are desirous that their work shall not be local, but shall spread over the United States. Already they have received numerous encouraging letters from persons interested in their efforts. Mrs. Theodore Birney, Mrs. Adlai Stevenson, Miss Morton, Mrs. William L. Wilson, Mrs. Arthur Birney, Mrs. H. W. Fuller, Miss Janet Richards, all of Washington, D. C., and Mrs. M. W. Kincaid, of San Francisco, have already visited New York and gained the co-operation of a large number of influential women there. The enthusiasm over the movement is already so great that the Congress which meets in Washington in February promises to be the greatest representation of women ever held in this country.

have to be spent in rest after the night of a party and the rest of the day wasted in social diversions it is plain that the children must be deprived of that tender influence and solicitude which can only come from the mother.

Then there are young mothers who need the advice and encouragement of older ones. Young mothers are so very apt to look lightly upon the grave responsibilities which rest with them.

For the mothers who have to stay at home on account of limited means a visit to a mothers' club will be of incalculable benefit as a relaxation from the cares of the home and an opportunity afforded to talk over methods of home economy, an interchange of views on the nursery and probably beneficial comparison of experiences.

There are to be no lines of social distinction drawn, so that membership in the club is open to rich and poor alike, and all women will be earnestly appealed to meet on the common ground of motherhood. I realize that soon we are to turn over the social and public affairs of our country to a new generation, and certainly we all desire that these new hands and hearts shall be even better than we are. It therefore devolves upon us older ones to make an effort to have them so.

Mrs. Theodore W. Birney, the originator of this project, presented the subject at some of the Mothers' meetings at Chautauque in the Summer of 1895. The earnest enthusiasm with which it was received made it evident that the thought needed only to be disseminated in order to be quickly accepted and acted upon by the hosts of conscientious thinking women of the world and to result in a centralization of their power toward the accomplishment of great and necessary reforms in the interests of humanity.

I have become thoroughly interested in this movement. I am sure it is but the beginning of great success. I believe all mothers will also become interested in what will help their children. Those of us who have cared children are more quick to extend our sympathy to objects such as this club has in view. I can not explain it now. It will develop itself in time. The enthusiasm of Mrs. Theodore Birney is infectious. We have all caught it.

When the Mothers' Congress meets it will consider subjects bearing upon the highest form of moral, physical and mental training of the young, and the best methods of instilling a love of humanity and of country will be dwelt upon.

Some of the evil, both physical and mental, existing in our schools will be looked into and suggestions will

be received for their remedy. It will be very gratifying that better means of developing in children characteristics which will elevate and ennoble them, will be discussed, and thus assist in overcoming the conditions which now prompt crime and make necessary the maintenance of jails, work houses and reformatories. Ideas in these great moral questions will be presented at the proper time by both men and women who are devoting their life's thought to this noble work, and whose names are everywhere known and revered. I earnestly hope that between now and the time for the Congress to meet every one who feels an interest in this cause will show some action. It will be an easy matter for the moving spirit in every city, town or village to form a Mothers' Club, and if not possible to be represented by a delegate at the National Congress to send a letter giving an account of their organization. Secretaries of clubs will be furnished suggestions which may prove helpful in the conduct of their meetings, which I believe cannot be held too often, say every week, if possible. Applications for information should be addressed to the National Congress of Mothers, No. 1429 Twentieth street, Washington, D. C.

When one stops to think that the average mother is but indifferently equipped with knowledge for the moral, mental and physical training of childhood it becomes at once apparent that the benefits to be derived in the organization of Mothers' clubs cannot be overestimated. It seems strange that in the grand plans that have been laid by the educational leaders of our universities and colleges that not one hour has been laid aside in which to impress young women of the responsibilities that may some day come to them and the manner in which they should be met. It seems deplorable that dense ignorance prevails of the very temperaments of children and their physical needs, with results too distressing to be dwelt upon.

We hope to make the republic realize that "its greatest work is to save the children," and thus we can accomplish just as soon as mothers' hearts are awakened to all the needs of childhood.

It is our expectation to have at the National Congress in February such a gathering of representative workers for the benefit of the human race that the divine fire of their enthusiasm will warm the hearts not only of all mothers, but of all mankind to an appreciation of the sacred obligations owed to the race through the children to-day and the generations to come. Among these will be many who are not mothers, but who, through their work, have shown themselves possessed of the maternal instinct in its highest and holiest sense, and who will, therefore, be most welcome.

### Message of

Mrs. Theodore W. Birney, the Originator of the Movement, to the Women

The Waldorf.  
Fifth Avenue and 33d St.  
New York.

### of America.

*Join in this  
movement in the  
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ity and the highest-  
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*To the Mothers of  
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To the mothers of America and to all men and women who love their country I make an earnest appeal that they join in this movement in the interests of humanity and the highest development of child life

*Alice McCallum Birney*

*Adlai Stevenson*